

PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Alizi Alias
Department of Psychology
International Islamic University Malaysia
Jalan Gombak
53100 Kuala Lumpur
03-20565096
alizi@iiu.edu.my

Hariyati Shahrina Abdul Majid (Dr.)
Department of Psychology
International Islamic University Malaysia
Jalan Gombak
53100 Kuala Lumpur
03-20565146
hari_iium@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to provide an Islamic perspective on the psychology of learning. This is a theoretical paper based on reviews of past secondary sources of Islamic and psychology literature. First, the paper will provide an Islamic overview on the concept of learning which are divided into two sources: directly from God (*ilahiyyah*) and through human experience (*insaniyyah*). God sources can be in a form of revelation (*wahy*), inspiration (*ilham*), and true dream (*ru'ya sadiqah*). Human experiences can be in a form of conditioning, observation, and cognition. Second, the paper will evaluate the contemporary learning theories from an Islamic perspective. The theories that will be discussed are classical conditioning theory, operant conditioning theory, observational learning theory, and insight learning theory. The Islamic perspectives will include Qur'anic verses, Prophetic *Hadiths*, stories of the Prophets and Companions, and the work of early Muslim scholars such as Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali using terms familiar to contemporary psychology. Third, the paper will suggest an integrated model of learning from an Islamic perspective which includes the element of soul as an important variable. Finally, based on the integrated model, the paper will describe an Islamically-oriented application of learning principles in the area of clinical psychology particularly the problem of alcoholism during the Prophet era. In the end, the paper intends to show that understanding the principles of learning can leads us to appreciate more the oneness and greatness of Allah and helps us fulfil our role as his servant (*'ibadah* role) in a better way. In addition, the paper also intend to show that applying the principles of learning can help us fulfil our role as the vicegerent of Allah (*khilafah* role) by improving the effectiveness of our *da'wah* (propagating Islam) and *tarbiyyah* (educational training).

Paper presented at the 3rd International Seminar on Learning and Motivation (10-12 September 2005) organised by Faculty of Cognitive Sciences & Education Universiti Utara Malaysia at City Bayview Hotel, Langkawi, Kedah, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this paper are: (1) to provide an Islamic overview on the concept of learning, (2) to evaluate contemporary learning theories from an Islamic perspective, (3) to integrate various learning theories to form an Islamic model of learning, and (4) to illustrate the application of the Islamic learning model from the Biography of the Prophet. The paper presupposes that the audiences have a working knowledge of the psychology of learning including familiarity with classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning; or will be using this paper in conjunction with psychology of learning textbooks. Therefore, this paper will focus more on evaluation of current theories as compared to description of theories of learning.

ISLAMIC OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF LEARNING

Contemporary psychology defines learning as the process by which experience or practice results in a relatively permanent change in behaviour or potential behaviour (Klein, 2002; Walker, 1996). Islam believes that the source of learning for human being can be *ilahi* or *insani* (Najati, 2001). *Ilahi* source of learning means learning that occur directly from Allah such as *wahy* (revelation), *ilham* (inspiration), and *ru'ya sadiqah* (true dream). Whereas *insani* source of learning means learning that occur from human experience through conditioning, observations, cognitions, and others. Regardless of the sources of learning, Muslims believe that Allah is the ultimate reason of our learning or behaviour changes. It is He who teaches us what we know not (QS 96: 5). And it is He who teaches us the Qur'an and ability to speak (QS 55: 2 & 4).

Obviously, learning directly from Allah requires the souls of human to be at a certain level of *iman*. Since contemporary Western psychology does not include soul as a subject matter of studies, the *ilahi* source receives no attention in psychology of learning textbooks. And since Islam believes that human being consists of both body and soul, Islamic perspective on how a person learn from *insani* experience also differs compared to contemporary Western psychological perspective. Many of the learning phenomena that cannot be explained by contemporary theories of learning (such as drastic change of behaviour of those who had performed *hajj* or pilgrimage) can actually be explained if we believe on the existence of the soul. In short, Islam believes in the existence of soul and its influence in human learning. This is the single most important difference between Islamic concept of learning and contemporary Western concept of learning.

EVALUATION OF CONTEMPORARY LEARNING THEORIES FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

This section will evaluate contemporary Western theories of learning from an Islamic perspective. The theories that will be evaluated are: (1) classical conditioning theory, (2) operant conditioning theory, and (3) cognitive theories of learning (which includes observational, and insight learning). This section, however, assumes that the readers are quite familiar with all the theories mentioned above, and thus will focus more on the evaluation rather than description of theories.

(1) Classical Conditioning

Classical conditioning involves giving a (conditioned) response to a neutral stimulus (which has become a conditioned stimulus) that has been associated with another unconditioned stimulus (Ormrod, 1999; Walker, 1995). It should be noted that even in psychology syllabus at A level (Eysenck & Flanagan, 2001), students are aware of scientific criticisms towards classical conditioning. This scientific evaluation of Western theories of psychology should be highlighted by teachers in order to prevent students from blindly accepting whatever theories originated from the West. Classical conditioning cannot explain all types of learned behaviour. Sometimes a response may not be elicited as a result of association between two stimuli as postulated by classical conditioning principles but more as a result of neural communication that occurs in the brain (Klein, 2002). These neural activities can be triggered by variables such as memory, emotion, and motives; variables which are considered unscientific in Pavlovian and Watsonian classical conditioning. By adding the element of the soul, it is possible to explore the possibility that iman-based activities such as *dhikr* (utterance and remembrance of Allah's name) will influence the memory, emotion, motives, or even the excitation or inhibition of neural activities.

From a general Islamic perspective, classical conditioning which is the backbone of early behaviourism can be an atheistic *madhhab* in terms of *'aqidah*. Badri (2000) quoted J. B. Watson (the father of classical conditioning) to show how Watson dislike treating human as animal "with something else in addition" because this something else is a trouble to science. Included in this "something else," according to Watson, are religion (*din*), hereafter (*akhirah*), moral (*akhlaq*), and love which are major *'aqidah* issues in Islam! Believing totally in the philosophy of classical conditioning is like converting to another religion with Pavlov and Watson as prophets! Students should be made aware of this underlying assumption about human nature that is against Islamic *'aqidah* and *shari'ah*.

Based on the argument above, readers may assume that we should abandon talking about classical conditioning altogether when teaching psychology of learning. However, that may not be a good strategy for at least two reasons. First, if we do not teach our students about classical conditioning and the works of Pavlov and Watson, they will read it somewhere else and be influenced by it (Badri, 1979). It is the teachers' job to explain the atheistic aspects of classical conditioning and make the students immune to them. Second, the atheistic aspects only involve the philosophical aspect of classical conditioning, not the principles or the applications. Not all principles of classical conditioning are unIslamic (Badri, 1979). In fact, some of the principles have been introduced long ago by our early Muslim scholars such as Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali. The difference is our early Muslim scholars do not subscribe to the mechanistic principles of current classical conditioning principles.

Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali both believe in the importance of association between stimuli to elicit a conditioned response. The main difference between their ideas and contemporary classical conditioning is, they include the cognitive aspects (e.g. memory and imagination) that moderate the stimulus-response relationship which is absent in

contemporary “mechanical” classical conditioning perspective. Ibn Sina believes that the association between unconditioned and neutral stimulus must be kept in *memory* before it can become a conditioned stimulus (Badri, 1997; Najati, 1993; Taha, 1995). He gave examples of how seeing food (without even eating it) is pleasurable and seeing sticks (without even been beaten by it) is painful. Ibn Sina also suggested that a person can feel disgusted (a conditioned response) with yellow honey (a conditioned stimulus) if he associates its colour with yellow bile (neutral stimulus).

Al-Ghazali went a step further by giving example of what is now known as Pavlovian “stimulus generalisation” when he observed that a person who was bitten by a snake is momentarily phobic of a colourful rope. He also went another step further, much earlier than Pavlov, by using salivation as his example. Al-Ghazali said that observing a person eating an acidic fruit, or even *imagining* such scene, can make the observer (or the imaginer) salivates. Not only it is an advanced theory at that time, it is also add to the current deficient theory by introducing the cognitive aspect of learning such as imagination. All these examples above are mentioned in much more details by Badri (1997), Najati (1993), and Taha (1995).

In short, although the philosophical aspects of classical conditioning can be dangerous to our *iman* (faith), its principles can be accepted with some modifications, which include physiological and cognitive factors. In addition to that, we believe that the susceptibility of a person to be conditioned to a certain stimulus also depends on the soul’s level of *iman* in such a way that he or she will never give a response that is unIslamic in terms of *`aqidah*, *shari`ah*, or *akhlaq*.

Operant Conditioning

According to operant conditioning, a response followed by a reinforcer (favourable stimulus) is strengthened and is therefore, more likely to occur (Ormrod, 1999). The opposite effect can be said when a response is followed by a punisher (aversive stimulus). Similar to classical conditioning, operant conditioning too has been scientifically criticised as early as in an A-level psychology textbook (Eysenck & Flanagan, 2001). Operant conditioning is not sufficient to explain most of human behaviours. Some, like Klein (2002) contended that the power of reinforcement is not absolute in explaining all behaviours. Some criminals who were punished repeatedly for their crimes continued involving in their crime actions. In some instances, the criminal actions increase in frequency as well as severity (Benda, 1999)! Variables such as self-awareness and empathy have been suggested to correlate with regulation of anger. Perhaps that is why rehabilitation intervention programmes in the prison have taken into account psychological growth with the aim to decrease the probability of repeated offending (cf. Bourke & Van Hasselth, 2001). However, the idea of psychological growth as an independent variable should take into account the moderating influence of soul. A strong soul may decrease the likelihood that behaviour is repeated after a punishment is given.

Similar to classical conditioning, operant conditioning philosophy is also atheistic from an Islamic perspective. Operant conditioning, which is the backbone of later behaviourism, is introduced by Skinner. Skinner, as quoted by Badri (1979), said that behaviour we called right or wrong (which Muslims believe as *halal* and *haram*) are nothing more than contingencies of responses towards immediate and tangible rewards and punishments, and have nothing to do with the concepts of good and bad. In other words, our *akhlaq*, our *'ibadah*, and even our *tawhid* are just illusions!

We should not, however, abandon the principles of operant conditioning altogether just because of its atheistic philosophical stance (Badri, 1979). The concept of learning or training through conditioning itself is not alien in Islam. Al-Qur'an (5: 4) mentions how ancient Arabs conditioned dogs and falcons in order to train the animals to hunt for them. Prophet Muhammad SAW also had mentioned how a person's response is influenced by its consequences by saying that "A *Mu'min* will never fall in the same hole twice" (narrated by Al-Shaykhan, Abu Dawud, and al-Shaybani). Badri (1997) reported that Al-Ghazali believes that ethical and emotional habits can be learned and trained. On a broader perspective, the concept of *jannah* (paradise) and *nar* (hell-fire) is based on rewards and punishment principle. This is because, it is in human nature to try to seek pleasant feelings and avoid unpleasant stimuli (Badri, 1979). To a very pious Muslim, even receiving Allah's pleasure is rewarding enough and receiving Allah's displeasure is punishing enough. The major differences between operant conditioning and Islamic concepts of rewards and punishment are, in Islam, the stimuli are intangible and delayed (as late as after death or even after Judgement Day!). Not only cognitive factor plays a role here, but also the soul factor, i.e. the level of *iman*, can influence whether Islamic stimuli are rewarding or punishing enough.

Contemporary Western psychology advocates that punishment is less effective than reinforcement (Ormrod, 2001). This concept is not alien in Islam based on a *Hadith Qudsi*: "When Allah decreed the Creation He pledged Himself by writing in His book which is laid down with Him: My *mercy* prevails over my *wrath*." That is also why a Muslim will receive 10 rewards for doing 1 good deed but only 1 sin for doing one bad deed. Even better than that, a Muslim who have the *niyyah* (intention) to do good deed will receive rewards whereas a Muslim who have intention to do bad deed will not receive sin before he or she actually do it. There is also a *da'wah* principle that *al-targhib* (making people feel good) should be prioritised before *al-tarhib* (making people feel fear) when promoting Islam (Abdul-Aziz, 1997) which is in line with psychological concept to prioritise reinforcement over punishment.

Even when punishments are practiced in Islamic tradition, they are usually administered to those who really understand his or her wrongdoings. For example beating the children who do not perform prayer is only allowed when they are ten years old, *only* after educating them about the importance of prayer *three years before* that (based on a hadith narrated by Ahmad). In other words, understanding the reason of punishment is a pre-requisite before administering it which is similar to what Western psychology has said. The story of Ka'ab bin Malik who refused to be exempted from punishment (social isolation) for being absent during the War of Tabuk also shows his understanding of his wrongdoing. A careful reading of *hadith* literature and the biography of the prophet will

show that new Muslims, simple-minded Bedouin, and *Munafiqin* (hypocrites) were rarely punished. Muslims whose souls have higher level of *iman* usually voluntarily asked for worldly punishment in order to avoid the punishment in the hereafter.

Famous examples can be seen in the only two punishments of *hudud zina* (penalty for adultery) ever conducted during the Prophet era where both of them gave self-confession and voluntarily asked to be punished (the case of Ma'iz ibn Malik and the lady of *al-Ghamidiyyah*). Another amazing thing about the Companion of the Prophet is that, sometimes, when they have done something wrong, they will self-select the types of punishment and self-administer it themselves. 'Ulwan (1988) had listed several examples illustrating self-administration of punishment (*al-mu'aqabah*) which he collected from the book *Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Qasidin*. One of the examples given is about a companion named Abu Talhah who was performing his prayer when a bird passed by. His concentration shifted from the prayer to the bird until he had forgotten the number of *rak'ah* that he had performed for the prayer. Feeling guilty, he had given his whole orchard to charity probably because he perceived that it is his orchard that has attracted the bird to fly by, and eventually distract him from his prayer. Based on the above-mentioned examples, perhaps it can be assumed that, the reason punishment really work in those cases because, ironically, the punishment is indirectly rewarding! All the examples of operant conditioning so far show that soul can play the moderating factor in influencing the stimulus-response relationship.

Clearly, contemporary operant conditioning theory of reinforcement cannot be applied to Muslims with high level of *iman*. For a Muslim, just by having faith that he or she will receive rewards, *jannah* (paradise), or Allah pleasure can be a positive reinforcer. Similarly, just by having faith that he or she will receive sins, *nar* (hellfire), or Allah's displeasure can be a punishment to a Muslim. In addition to that, a Muslim who has faith that Allah will always accept *tawbah* (repentance) for His servant (if he or she asks for it seriously and sincerely) it can act as a negative reinforcer (alleviating the feel of guilt that can lead to anxiety and depression) for Allah is Most Merciful and Most Compassionate.

The concept of rewards and sins in Islam can be explained from the perspective of schedules of reinforcement (continuous and partial). Although the concepts of rewards and sins in Islam are based on continuous schedule (awarded each time after we perform good or bad deed), there is an element of variability in terms of interval and ratio because the rewards and sins are unobservable. Therefore, they can become powerful motivators for Muslims who have *iman* in practicing *ma'ruf* (good) and avoiding *munkar* (evil). It is appropriate, however, to administer observable rewards to non-believers who are kind to Islam or new Muslims. This is the underlying reason for giving *zakat* money to *mu'allafah qulubuhum*. This is also the reason why Prophet Muhammad SAW gave the war booty to the *Tulaqa'* (new Muslims from Makkah) after the War of Hunayn instead of giving it to the highly committed Ansar Muslims from Madinah. Although, initially the Ansar were not satisfied, eventually, *iman* prevailed over the needs for worldly rewards. Since the soul (with its various level of *iman*) can influence the relationship between reinforcement and response, observable rewards can be used to motivate, not only non-Muslims and new Muslims, but also Muslims with weak *iman* or even children whose *iman* is not yet fully developed. For Muslims who want to maintain his souls in the state

of *iman*, reading al-Qur'an regularly and understanding its meaning is suggested to receive regular "spiritual" and "cognitive" rewards and/or punishments by reading Allah's personal praises and warning directed to each individual readers.

On a more specific perspective on the concept of reinforcement schedules, Prophet Muhammad (SAW), with inspirations from Allah, had been using variable partial or intermittent reinforcement schedule to motivate consistent rate of response from Muslims. The two examples concern the time of *al-istijabah* when Allah will grant whatever His servants wish for during an unspecified time at night (based on a *hadith* narrated by Muslim) and during an unspecified time on Friday (based on a *hadith* narrated by al-Shaykhan, Malik, and Nasa'i). The most famous application of partial reinforcement schedule is the multiplied rewards during an unspecified night in last 10 days of Ramadan (based on two *hadith* narrated by al-Shaykhan and al-Tirmidhi). If a Muslim is spiritually motivated to receive unobservable, delayed rewards, then the above-mentioned partial reinforcement schedules will lead to a high and consistent rate of response. Needless to say, soul plays an important role in moderating the response towards the reinforcement.

Observational Learning

Observational learning is based on Bandura's (1986) social learning theory. According to this theory, people will imitate other people's behaviour depending on the outcome of the behaviour. Unlike classical and operant conditioning, observational learning incorporates both cognitive and social factors in explaining behavioural changes. However, observational learning still cannot explain all behaviours. Current literature shows that elements of social learning theory are relative, rather than absolute in shaping learned behaviours (Curran, White, & Hansell, 2000). Roger (2003), for example, found out that observational learning merely accounted only 22-24% of the variance in alcohol use and delinquency and 6% in the prediction of drug use. The strongest predictor actually, is moral disengagement. Other research (cf. Benda & Corwyn, 2000) indicated that religious factors, over and above the elements of observational learning, seem to predict criminal behaviour. These research supported the notion that soul as a variable should be taken into account when explaining learned behaviour.

Islam emphasises on learning by observing a model. Prophet Muhammad SAW has always directed his companion to learn *salat* (narrated by Bukhari) and hajj (narrated by Muslim, al-Nasa'i, Abu Dawud, and Ahmad) by observing him doing it. Al-Qur'an (QS: 5: 31) illustrates how Cane (*Qabil*) learned to bury the corpse of his brother Abel (*Habil*) by observing a raven who scratched the ground to bury another dead bird. Another example of observational learning took place when the companions initially refused the Prophet's order to perform *tahallul* to cancel their 'umrah but later obliged after *observing* the Prophet performed it first. Some theorists believe that an observer needs to observe that the model being "rewarded/ punished" before reproducing the behaviour performed by the observer. Based on the examples above, it seems that the model does not need to be rewarded in order for the observers to reproduce the behaviour. In the example of Cane, his soul's needs for guidance (*hidayah*) may lead him to model the bird's behaviour. And in the case of the Companions, their souls' needs to follow the

Prophet SAW as the spiritual guide may lead them to model the Prophet's behaviour despite being frustrated of not having the opportunity to perform *'umrah* on that particular year.

Prophet Muhammad has been a role model for all Muslims who have hope for Allah and the hereafter (Al-Qur'an 33: 21). However, based on observational learning, it can be quite impossible to explain how can Muslims nowadays imitate or model the behaviour of the Prophet who had died 14th century ago? Perhaps the acceptance of the Muslims' souls that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah provides a state of readiness to learn from an unobservable model. In addition to that, numerous *hadiths* and detailed descriptions in *sirah al-nabawiyyah* (biography of the Prophet) about Prophet's words, actions, and agreements, facilitate a higher-level or "virtual" observational learning. Clearly, without *iman* in the soul, this kind of learning could not have taken place. Another limitation about observational learning is the soul's influence on learning can be more powerful than the model itself. Al-Qur'an (66: 10) shows that, even with the presence of an ideal model (a husband who is a prophet), the wife of Noah (Nuh) AS and the wife of Lot (Lut) AS followed the unbelievers instead of their husband. In contrast, Al-Qur'an (66: 11) gave examples of the wife of the Pharoah (Fir'aun) who has a bad model (a husband who claimed to be a god), but refrain from following him, and instead followed the right path with Prophet Moses (Musa) AS. In other words, soul can play an important factor as moderator to observational learning.

Insight Learning

Insight learning involves a sudden restructuring or reorganization of a problem (Walker, 1996). Criticisms of the theory include research results not replicated and perhaps the learning can be better explained by operant conditioning theory (Eysenck & Flanagan, 2001). As mentioned in the introductory paragraph, sometimes we learn directly from Allah in the forms of revelation, inspiration, and true dream. All these types of learning are considered a higher-level of insight learning and can never be explained without believing the existence of the soul, and can never be obtained without the soul having a higher level of *iman*. Since only the Prophets are given the privilege of receiving revelation (*wahy*) in the form of *kitab* and *suhf*, the paper will only talk about inspiration and true dream.

There are many examples in the Qur'an that can illustrate the concept of learning through inspiration and true dreams which is sometimes labelled as *'ilm al-ladunniyy*. Najati (2001), based on Al-Qur'an and Hadith, has given several examples illustrating learning by inspiration. Some of them are mentioned below:

- (1) how Allah gave inspiration to Prophet Soloman (Sulayman) to differ from his father Prophet David (Dawud) on a legal matter (Al-Qur'an 21: 78-79)
- (2) how Allah gave inspiration to Prophet David to make an armour suit (Al-Qur'an 21: 80).
- (3) how Allah gave inspiration to Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) in interpreting dreams (Al-Qur'an (Al-Qur'an 12: 6, 21-22 & 93; 2: 37)
- (4) how Allah gave inspiration to Prophet Jacob (Ya'qub) on matters pertaining his son Joseph (Al-Qur'an 12: 86 & 96).

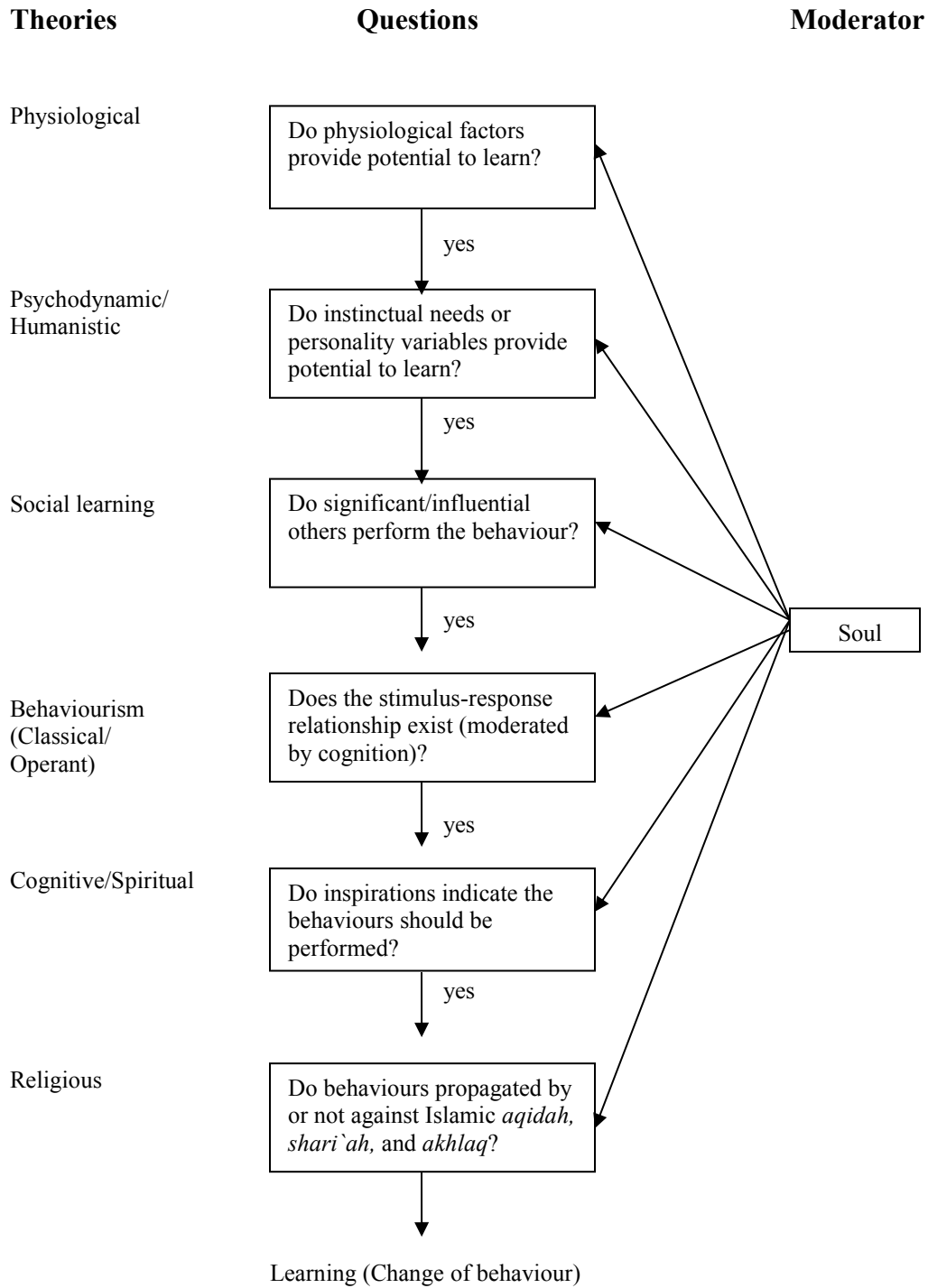
- (5) how Allah gave inspiration to a faithful servant of Allah (Al-Qur'an 18: 65-66)
- (6) how Allah gave inspiration to non-prophets such as the mother of Prophet Moses (Musa) (Al-Qur'an 20: 38-39; 28: 7) and the disciples of Prophet Jesus (Isa) (5: 111)
- (7) A hadith relating that `Umar RA is a *muhaddath* (a person who is given inspiration) (narrated by Al-Bukhari), and that the Truth is with `Umar's tongue (narrated by Ahmad),

When discussing about inspiration and dream as sources of learning, and especially sources of *shari`ah* to guide our behaviour, we have to understand that they are not part of the valid *dalil* (evidences) in Islamic *shari`ah* unless they do not go against the Islamic rulings based on al-Qur'an and *al-Sunnah*. This concern has been detailed out by al-Qaradawi (1997) when he described the third principle of *al-Fahm* (understanding) propagated by Hasan Al-Banna and the readers are advised to refer to his writing to understand the issue better. Since Islam concerns about scientific values such as the accuracy of the source of insight as source of *Shari`ah* rulings, it can be said not all insight will lead to correct or desirable learning. Insight learning is a valid phenomenon, but only the soul with high level of *iman* can get true learning from it.

SUGGESTED ISLAMIC MODEL OF LEARNING

Reviews on various theories mentioned above shows that every theory has some truth and is supported by Islam but has its own limitation in giving a full picture of human learning. Psychology should take into consideration all these theories and incorporate Islamic perspectives of learning in order to give an alternative, more comprehensive look of human learning. Scientific and Islamic evaluation shows that learning principles should take into consideration factors such as physiological, personality, environmental, cognitive, and spiritual factors. According to Badri (1997), al-Ghazali had long before talked about learning ability as influenced by some heritable and instinctual factors, individual differences, stimulus-response relationship, and cognitive factors without neglecting the influence of the soul. The model that we suggested is inspired by current research and al-Ghazali's view (see Figure 1). The model of human learning below is not developed based on past cumulative research. It is rather a proposed loose model to guide future research and to make sense of unexplained factors found in various theories from the West. As you will notice, the model below incorporate not only learning theories like classical conditioning and operant conditioning but also major theoretical perspectives in psychology (physiological, psychodynamic, humanistic, cognitive, and behaviourism) plus spiritual perspective in explaining learned behaviour.

Figure 1. The Islamic Model of Motivation



ISLAMICALLY-ORIENTED APPLICATIONS OF LEARNING PRINCIPLES

The application part of learning will try to illustrate the change of behaviour of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad SAW who were able to change their behaviour of heavy drinking (alcoholism). This is to inspire modern Muslim psychologists to use the same principles in changing the bad behaviour of contemporary Muslims such as alcoholism, drug abuse, smoking, etc. The application is inspired and adapted from the writing of Badri (1976) on "Islam and Alcoholism." The word alcohol used in this paper is referring to liquor, not the various types of alcohol that is sometimes used as cleaners or perfumes.

Physiological perspective:

It is understandable that most Arab at that time were alcoholic because their forefathers had been alcoholics, and this had possibly provided genetic, neuronal, or hormonal potentials for the Companions to become alcoholics as well. But since the inception of Islam, some of the Islamic practices may have change the physiological potential to a more positive side. Practices such as *wudu`* (ablution), *salat* (prayer), *dhikr* (utterance and remembrance of Allah), *tilawah* (reading the Qur'an), and *sawm* (fasting) may have provided positive potential to prepare for abstinence from alcohol. Besides that, some worldly practices such as proper diet (semi-vegetarian), eating supplement (honey and *habbat al-sawda`* or black seeds), and exercises (preparing for Jihad) may also have provided positive potentials to change behaviour. Supported with *tarbiyyah nafsyyah* (souls education) in terms of *`aqidah*, *`ibadah*, and *akhlaq* during Makkan period and part of Medinan period, the potential to continue to become alcoholics had changed to potential to abstain from alcohols.

Psychodynamic and Humanistic perspectives:

According to Badri (1976), one of the reasons that alcohols become rampant in ancient Arab society was the deep-rooted unconscious feelings of pride, insecurity, and romantic passion; which would be of interest to modern psychodynamic theories. But the coming of Islam has instilled the sense of pride for the true *`aqidah*, sense of security by Allah's power, and love and passion for Allah. These psychodynamic variables, influenced by Islam, had provided the potential for the Companions to change any bad behaviour in future, which in our case, heavy drinking.

From humanistic perspectives, individual differences also influence whether the Companions would be involved in alcoholism or not, before or after converting to Islam. For example, Badri (1976) mentioned that Uthman ibn al-'Affan RA never touch the alcohol even during pre-Islamic period despite having the physiological and psychodynamic potential to do so. Even after converting to Islam, not all people have the sensitivity or get the hint that alcohols are bad. Badri (1976) mentioned that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab RA was already suspicious when the first verse that talk about alcohol is revealed (QS 16: 67) that subtly differentiate between strong drink and good nourishment. Although the process of *tahrim khamr* (prohibition of alcohols) took a lengthy period and

involve a few stages, individual differences showed that some of the Companions had already been abstaining 100% from alcohols from the very first stage, while other Companions postponed until the final stage of prohibition. But it is the *iman* in the souls of Companions that ultimately enable them to show mass abstinence of alcohol during the final stage.

Social Learning Perspective

It is understandable if observational learning contributed to alcoholism among the Arabs. The children and teenagers may have been following their fathers' habit. The adults, on the other hands, may have been following the habits of some significant or influential others. In fact, heavy drinking had become an Arab culture, models are everywhere for any new potential non-alcoholic to become one. But when the Prophet SAW migrated (*hijrah*) to Medina, he had first and foremost created brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*) tied with the divine *'aqidah* so they become united and cohesive. This unity and cohesiveness had facilitated the compliance of the Companions to follow other fellow Companions who had been abstaining from alcohols. And of course, the Prophet SAW and a few Companions who had never touch alcohols and the Companions who had abstained from alcohol in the early stage of prohibition had provided a model that increase the number of followers or at least provide potential for future abstinence. And this social learning is based on *iman*, the belief that the Prophet SAW is the true guidance and the pleasure of following their brothers whom they love for the sake of Allah.

Behaviourism

The stages of prohibition of alcoholic had some striking similarities with modern behaviour therapy called systematic desensitisation (Badri, 1976) but in a larger scale. The stages involved four stages (Badri, 1976): (1) subtly making no association between strong drink and good nourishment (QS 16: 67), (2) directly but cautiously associating alcohols with greater sin compared to their usefulness without prohibiting it (QS 2: 219), (3) restricting alcoholic drinking by not associating it with the most important divine practice i.e. *salat* (prayer) forcing them to abstain from alcohol at five different times in a day (QS 4: 43), and (4) direct prohibition and associating alcohols with filthy things and devils (QS 5: 90-91). These associations are what modern psychology refers to as classical conditioning. The very concepts of rewards and sins that were well-known even during Makkan period may also have influenced the behavioural change in a gradual manner which has striking similarity with shaping technique introduced by operant conditioning theory. At each of this prohibition stage, and while Prophet Muhammad SAW education on *'aqidah*, *'ibadah*, and *akhlaq* continues, some of the Companions may have totally abstain from alcohols, some of them may have reduced themselves to social drinking only, some of them may have felt guilt, and some of them just getting ready for the next stage to stop drinking. In other words, an effective combination of classical and operant conditioning principles may have contributed to mass abstinence of alcohols. In addition to cognitive factors that Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali had mentioned earlier, the soul factors also play an important role in all the behavioural changes.

Cognitive-spiritual Perspective

`Umar al-Khattab RA is one of those Companions who were gifted with inspirations as mentioned before. It is this `Umar who had been very suspicious about the evil nature of alcohol even during the first subtle stage of alcohols prohibitions. And it is this very `Umar who, after the third stage, met Prophet Muhammad SAW to ask Allah to give a clear statement about the status of alcohols in Islam. And as mentioned by Badri (1976), some of the Companions already knew that alcohol is bad and somewhat just waiting for the time of clear prohibition before they stopped drinking. This can be explained by another type of modern cognitive theory of learning called latent learning (Klein, 2002; Walker, 1996).

Religious Perspective

This perspective postulates, in general sense, a Muslim should enjoin the *wajib* (obligatory), *mandub* (desirable) and *halal* (permissible) behaviours and avoid the *haram* (forbidden) and *makruh* (undesirable) behaviours. When the Qur'an stated clearly that alcohol is *haram* (QS 5: 90-91), a mass behavioural changes took place. Badri (1976) described the situation by reporting that Muslims in Medina "threw away the remaining drinks in their cups and broke the large baked clay pots in which other drinks were being fermented." (Badri, 1976, p. 3). Some of them, after hearing the call 'Surely alcohol has been forbidden' broke and emptied the "large clay pots and skins full of fermented date-palm, honey, and grape till the streets of Medina ran with little rivers of *al-khamr* (alcohol) as a testimony to the greatest anti-alcoholism movement that humanity has ever witnessed." (Badri, 1976, p. 4). Naturally, as Muslims the *shari'ah* rulings such as *haram* should be powerful enough as a variable to change their behaviours. Actually, as we can see from contemporary Muslims' behaviour, this variable is moderated by the souls and their level of iman.

According to Badri (1976), the real reason for the success this behavioural changes started many years before the prohibition of alcohols, specifically since the inception of Islam. During the early stage of Islam during Makkan period, instead of attacking alcoholism, Islam first attacked the false *`aqidah* (belief), ignorance, and values that are based on that belief (Badri, 1979). It is this ignorance that had become the roots of all evil behaviour. That is why the first thirteen years after prophethood was spent focusing on establishing the new belief emphasising faith to the oneness of Allah, the unseen angels, the hereafter (including paradise and hellfire), the revealed books, and various prophets. Changing the souls of the Companions had changed them as persons in terms of mental processes (*`aqidah*) and behaviour (*`ibadah and akhlaq*). The classical conditioning, operant conditioning, or observational learning that came years later were only symptomatic treatment that witnessed this unbelievably mass-scale of behavioural changes made easier by the change of the souls years before. Treating symptoms of observable behaviour only without looking at the deep-rooted cause would not have caused a massive behavioural change.

The above application shows the importance of educating current young Muslims, new Muslims, or Muslims who have just realised the importance of going back to his/her root in Islam in terms of correct interpretation of *`aqidah*, *`ibadah*, and *akhlaq* first, so that all behavioural intervention programmes either in the form behaviour therapy, behaviour modification, or even modelling will be more effective and successful.

CONCLUSION

Both proposed Islamic model of learning and its application are based on an ideal illustration of learned behaviour. However, if we let ourselves be influenced by the reality, we may be drifted because reality changes. It is far better to strive for the ideal so that we can *change* the reality, just like Prophet Muhammad SAW had successfully changed the habit of the Companions on alcoholism and create an ideal Islamic generations the human has ever known.

Studying basic psychological principles such as learning can help us increase our knowledge and *iman* and fulfil our role as a servant (*`abid*) of Allah by understanding human behaviour and mental processes. In this case, understanding human learning processes make us appreciate the beauty and complexity of human being of Allah's creation when he/she involved in learning processes. *Applying* basic psychological, on the other hand, can help us fulfil our role as a vicegerent (*khalifah*) by performing *da`wah* or *tarbiyyah* to solve human problems by controlling human behaviour and mental processes. In this, case applying Islamic oriented learning model can help us change the behaviours of the *ummah* and mankind towards the better. Indeed, studying and applying psychology of learning as a Muslim is a religious experience and will be receiving, God-willing, immense rewards from Allah.

REFERENCES

- Abdul-Aziz, J. A. (1997). *Fiqh dakwah* (Malay translation of the Arabic book Al-da`wah: Qawa'id wa usul). Solo, Indonesia: Intermedia.
- Badri, M. B. (1979). *The dilemma of Muslim psychologists*. London, United Kingdom: MWH London Publishers.
- Badri, M. B. (1997). *Are contributions of early Muslim scholars relevant to modern psychotherapists?* Paper presented at the International Seminar on Counseling and Psychotherapy: An Islamic Perspective, at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Badri, M. (2000). *The AIDS crisis: a natural product of modernity's sexual revolution*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Medeena Books.
- Bandura, A. (1986) *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Benda, B.B. (1999) Theoretical model with reciprocal effects of youthful crime and drug use. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 25(1-2), 77-108.
- Benda, B.B. & Corwyn, R.F. (2000). A theoretical model of religiosity and drug use with reciprocal relationships: a test using structural equation modelling. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 26(4), 43-67.

- Bourke, M.L. & Van Hasselt, V.B. (2001) Social problem-solving skills training for incarcerated offenders: a treatment manual. *Behavior Modification*, 25(2), 163-188.
- Curran, G.M., White, H.R. & Hansell, S. (2000). Personality, environment and problem drug use. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 30(2), 375-405.
- Eysenck, M. W., & Flanagan, C. (2001). *Psychology for A2 level*. East Sussex, England: Psychology Press Ltd.
- Klein, S.B. (2002) *Learning: principles and applications*. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.
- Omrod, J.A. (1999) *Human learning* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Najati, M. U. (1989). *Al-hadith al-nabawiyy wa 'ilm al-nafs*. Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq.
- Najati, M. U. (1993). *Al-dirasat al-nafsaniyyah 'inda al-'ulama' al-Muslimin*. Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq.
- Najati, M. U. (2001). *Jiwa manusia: Dalam sorotan al-Qur'an* (Malay translation of the Arabic book Al-Qur'an wa 'ilm al-nafs). Jakarta, Indonesia: CV Cendekia Sentra Muslim.
- Al-Qaradawi, Y (1997). *Sikap Islam terhadap ilham, kasyf, mimpi, jimat, perdukunan, dan jampi* (Malay translation of the Arabic book Mawqif al-Islam min al-ilham wa al-kashf wa al-ru'ya wa min al-tama'im w al-kahanah wa al-ruqa). Jakarta, Indonesia: Bina Tsaqafah.
- Rogers, M.K. (2003) A social learning theory and moral disengagement analysis of criminal computer behaviour: an exploratory study. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences*, 64(6-A), 1974.
- Taha, Z. B. (1995). *'Ilm al-nafs fi al-turath al-'arabiyy al-Islamiyy*. Khartoum, Sudan: Matba'ah Jami'ah al-Khartum.
- 'Ulwan, A. N. (1988). *Menuju ketakwaan* (Malay translation of the Arabic book Ruhaniyyat al-Du'at). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Pustaka Salam.
- Walker, J.T (1996) *The psychology of learning*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- White, H. R; Pandina, R. & Chen, P (2002). Developmental trajectories of cigarette use from early adolescence into young adulthood. *Drug & Alcohol Dependence*, 56(2), 167-178.